

Message Text

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ACTION H-03

INFO OCT-01 EUR-08 NEA-07 ISO-00 SS-07 NSC-06 AID-01
/033 W

-----016616 120821Z /23

R 120721Z JUL 77
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9175
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY LONDON

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: OREP (HAMILTON, LEE)
SUBJ: CODEL HAMILTON MEETING WITH WEST BANK PALESTINIANS

1. SUMMARY: CODEL HAMILTON MET AT DINNER JULY 7
WIDE SPECTRUM OF WEST BANK LEADERS RANGING FROM
PRO-PLO NATIONALISTIC MAYORS TO PRO-HASHEMITE
NOTABLES AND INCLUDING EXPERTS ON ECONOMY, EDUCATION
AND UNRWA. WEST BANKERS CAME ACROSS AS MODERATE
NATIONALISTS DESIROUS OF INDEPENDENT WEST BANK/GAZA
STATE WILLING TO LIVE IN PEACE WITH ISRAEL. MAYORS
ADMITTED THEIR CONTACT WITH PLO WAS LIMITED AND
CODEL OPINED ARAFAT AND EXCOM WOULD HAVE MORE
DECISIVE ROLE THAN WEST BANKERS IN DETERMINING
TERRITORY'S FUTURE. END SUMMARY.

2. AT CODEL'S REQUEST, CONGEN HOSTED DINNER TO WHICH
LEADING WEST BANKERS WERE INVITED. GUESTS RANGED
FROM PRO-PLO NATIONALIST MAYORS (MULHIM OF HALHUL,
ZAFAR AL-MASRI, DEPUTY MAYOR OF NABLUS) TO PRO-
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HASHEMITE NOTABLES (ANWAR NUSEIBEH). ALSO INCLUDED
WERE BETHLEHEM MAYOR FREIJ, UNRWA OFFICIAL BAKERJIAN,
IBRAHIM MATTER OF MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND
FUAD ZARU OF FRIENDS' BOYS' SCHOOL IN RAMALLAH.

3. WEST BANKERS, WHILE STRESSING NEED FOR SELF-DETERM-
INATION AND END TO ISRAELI OCCUPATION, ALSO WENT OUT

OF THE WAY TO STATE THEIR READINESS TO LIVE IN PEACE WITH ISRAEL WITHIN PRE-JUNE 1967 BOUNDARIES. THEY ALSO RECOGNIZED INDEPENDENT PALESTINE WOULD HAVE LINKS WITH JORDAN AND PERHAPS OTHER ARAB STATES.

4. REPRESENTATIVE HAMILTON HAD LENGTHY TET-A-TETES WITH NUSEIBEH AND FREIJ AS WELL AS EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH MAYOR MULHIM WHO ARTICULATED POINT OF VIEW IN PRECEDING PARAGRAPH.

5. REPRESENTATIVE OBEY AND ROSENTHAL SEEMED WILLING TO CONCEDE MULHIM WAS A REASONABLE MAN BUT ASKED HOW HIS VIEWS WERE CONVEYED TO PLO EXCOM AND WHAT WEIGHT THEY HAD MULHIM STATE THAT THOSE WHO HAD BORNE

THE BRUNT OF OCCUPATION HAD A MORAL RIGHT TO HAVE A VOICE IN THEIR OWN FUTURE. HE COMPLAINED ISRAEL WOULD NOT PERMIT WEST BANKERS TO ATTEND SUCH GATHERINGS AS PNC IN CAIRO. REP. ROSENTHAL COMMENTED, "IT'S OFTEN THAT WAY, THOSE WHO LEAVE HAVE PREPONDERANCE AND DECIDE THE FATE OF THOSE WHO STAY."

6. NABLUS DEPUTY MAYOR AL-MASRI EMPHASIZED ABSOLUTE NEED FOR SELF-DETERMINATION BY PALESTINIANS. HE FAVORED AN INTERREGNUM BETWEEN ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AND EXERCISE OF SELF-DETERMINATION DURING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WHICH PALESTINIANS COULD SORT THEMSELVES OUT POLITICALLY UNDER A UN OR ARAB LEAGUE MANDATE. REP. ROSENTHAL THOUGHT IT UNLIKELY ISRAELIS WOULD WITHDRAW WHILE UNCERTAIN WHO WOULD FILL THE VACUUM. HOWEVER, HE STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF NEGOTIATING PROCESS. CITING HIS PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE IN LABOR RELATIONS, REP. ROSENTHAL ARGUED THAT THE OUTCOME OF NEGOTIATIONS IS USUALLY UNFORESEEN AND, IF SUCCESSFUL, BOTH SIDES FIND THEMSELVES AGREEING TO A BARGAIN THEY WOULD NOT HAVE ACCEPTED PRIOR TO NEGOTIATIONS.

7. UNRWA OFFICIAL BAKERJIAN DISPUTED REP. OBEY'S VIEW THAT UNRWA WAS MISMANGED AND THAT OVERHEAD EXPENSES WERE TOO HIGH. REP. OBEY CITED RECENT CONGRESS PAY INCREASE AS EXAMPLE WHERE SALARY SCALES, ALTHOUGH DEEMED REASONABLE BY EXPERTS, CAUSE WIDESPREAD ADVERSE REACTION.

8. REP. AND MRS. MIKVA HAD LONG CONVERSATION WITH ZARU ON EDUCATION AND LIVING CONDITIONS ON THE WEST BANK.

9. AL MASRI AND MATTAR BRIEFED CODEL ON ECONOMIC SITUATION ON WEST BANK, AND ON EFFORTS OF ISRAELIS TO TIE WEST BANK ECONOMY CLOSER TO ISRAEL. STAFF MEMBERS PARTICIPATED IN ABOVE AND SEPARATE CONVERSATIONS.

10. COMMENT: MEETING WAS UNIQUE EXPERIENCE FOR ALL CONCERNED. WEST BANKERS WERE GENUINELY PLEASED THAT CODEL ASKED TO MEET WITH THEM. THIS MESSAGE NOT CLEARED WITH CODEL.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770246-1355
Format: TEL
From: JERUSALEM
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770768/aaaacgse.tel
Line Count: 126
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 5512e76c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION H
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1892276
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CODEL HAMILTON MEETING WITH WEST BANK PALESTINIANS
TAGS: OREP, (HAMILTON, LEE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/5512e76c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009